

Madam Speaker, on Monday Defense Secretary Gates confirmed what many of us in Congress have long suspected – the Bush Administration plans to leave 130,000 troops in Iraq until the day he leaves office next January.

The war has been misguided from the start and mismanaged in its prosecution. It has led to a significant military readiness crisis, deteriorating conditions, a readiness crisis for National Guard forces here at home and record low standing for the abroad.

This month, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau said that 88% of stateside Guard units are “very poorly equipped” with less than half of what they need to respond to a domestic crisis. Five years of war is indeed straining our troops force and their equipment.

And yet, the Bush Administration wants more of the same and is content to leave hundreds of thousands of troops in Iraq for the foreseeable future.

Madam Speaker, the Democratic-led Congress will continue to fight for a change in direction and responsibly redeploy our troops out of Iraq .